

Message Text

SECRET

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51

ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /031 W

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O P 291251Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3719

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 4965

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MOPS

SUBJ: ISRAELI ASSESSMENT OF SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITIES

1. DEFMIN PERES TOLD ME LAST NIGHT THAT HE CONSIDERS RECENT ACTIVITY OF SOVIET MINESWEEPERS IN ISRAELI-CONTROLLED WATERS, WHICH HAD JUST ENDED, TO HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY POLITICALLY MOTIVATED. HE SAID THERE WAS NO POSSIBLE MILITARY REASON, OF WHICH ISRAELIS WERE AWARE, FOR SOVIET VESSELS TO HAVE BEEN IN THOSE PARTICULAR WATERS. SOVIETS, HE SAID, WERE PROBING ISRAELI DETERMINATION TO DEFEND OCCUPIED TERRITORY AND CEASED THEIR ACTIVITIES ONCE FIRMNESS OF ISRAELI REACTION WAS THOROUGHLY CLEAR. PERES SAID THAT IF ISRAELIS HAD NOT REACTED VIGOROUSLY, SOVIETS WOULD HAVE PROCEEDED TO INTRUDE IN OTHER WAYS, INITIALLY TO SHOW THAT ONLY THEY WERE CAPABLE OF ACTING TO ASSERT EGYPTIAN INTERESTS AND, IN LONGER RUN, SYSTEMATICALLY TO ERODE OVERALL ISRAELI POSITIONS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

2. MAJGEN GAZIT, DIRECTOR OF MILITARY INTLLIGENC, WAS PRESENT AND INDICATED FULL AGREEMENT WITH PERES' ASSESSMENT.

3. COMMENT. PERES' REMARKS WERE MADE TO ME IN GENERAL CONTEXT OF STRONG POSITION HE WAS TAKING THAT ISRAELIS WERE ADAMANT IN THEIR DETERMINATION NOT TO BE DICTATED TO BY ANONE, INCLUDING US AND USSR. IT IS INTERESTING REFLECTION OF ISRAELI STATE OF MIND TO NOTE THAT ISRAELI PRESS TODAY IS REFERRING TO 1970 PERIOD WHEN

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ISRAEL WARNED RUSSIAN PILOTS (FLYING EGYPTIAN MARKED MIGS)

THAT IF THEY CROSSED A CERTAIN LINE THEIR INTENTIONS WOULD
BE INTERPRETED AS HOSTILE. SOVIETS ALLEGEDLY IGNORED THIS
WARNING AND SUBSEQUENTLY SUFFERED LOSS OF FIVE MIG 21'S.

4. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANYTHING ADDRESSEES FEEL THEY CAN
ADD TO OUR UNDERSTANDING OF SITUATION.
KEATING

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NNN

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